



2022 Youth Leadership Program Description

Overview

Green Village Initiative (GVI) is a nonprofit based in Bridgeport, Connecticut whose mission is to grow food, knowledge, leadership and community through urban gardening and farming to create a more just food system in Bridgeport.

The Youth Leadership Program cultivates young food leaders in Bridgeport by developing skills in agricultural knowledge, food justice, career readiness, and leadership. These skills are achieved through participation in the Summer Youth Crew, Food Leader Advisory Group, and Youth Fellowship. Youth determine their role in the food system by forging meaningful connections with their neighbors, land, community, and city.

COVID-19 Mandates

All Youth, Farm staff, visitors, volunteers, and gardeners are expected to wear masks and practice social distancing at all times on Reservoir Community Farm. We ask that even those who have received the COVID-19 vaccine wear masks to ensure our community stays safe and healthy while on the farm.

Summer Youth Crew

The 2021 Youth Summer Crew will run from June 22nd to August 14th, and participants work up to 26 hours a week. The work day is a combination of farm work, skill building workshops, group activities, providing farm tours for visitors, and more! Youth will be paid \$12 per hour to work, develop, learn, and grow into leaders with the GVI team at Reservoir Community Farm.

If accepted, participants must be prepared for:

- Youth will commit to at least 3-4 hours a day of intense physical labor farming outdoors during the summer (This means heat, humidity, bending, kneeling, and lifting heavy



objects!) This requires a mindset of endurance and consistent positive energy level for you and your team!

- Group discussions will ask you to think deeply about social issues you may have not talked about before.
- You will participate in skill building workshops which require your participation and a ready-to-learn attitude.
- You will meet a variety of people with different stories and opinions united by a passion of contributing to the Bridgeport community.

Our Youth Leadership Program cultivates young leaders of community change through a summer program in agriculture, job-readiness, food justice, and organizing. Skill-building workshops include community organizing, advocacy, youth identities and voices, and food systems. Beginning in 2020 GVI partnered with Housatonic Community College to offer our youth college credits for completing the summer program.

The City of Bridgeport and Mayor Ganim designated October 3rd, 2016 Bridgeport's Food Leader Day as a result of our youth's impact on the city. In 2016, our youth completed 1,380 hours of farming and 300 hours of food justice and leadership skill building.

Some of the skills gained from summer program:

- Harvest, process, weigh, and package organically grown produce.
- Insect identification.
- Food Safety Certification.
- Public speaking through giving tours to outside groups, peers, and children.
- Leading volunteer groups.
- Plant and crop identification and harvesting measures (for example, how to water properly, when to tell if the crop is ready for harvest, if the crop is healthy, how to plant all different kinds of vegetables).
- College Readiness and Increased Employability.
- Working with community farmers, gardeners, and members.
- Building urban garden/garden beds.



Food Leader Advisory Group

The program’s Food Leader Advisory Group (FLAG) is made up of currently enrolled youth and recent program graduates who direct our team towards creating the most valuable summer experience that we can for youth in Bridgeport. FLAG meets monthly via zoom, with some opportunities to meet at Reservoir Community Farm during the summer months.

1. The Food Leader Advisory Group is made up of young Bridgeport leaders who will provide valuable insight and help shape the direction into which the Youth Leadership Program goes.
2. The FLAG provides an opportunity for youth crew members to take a stake in the Youth Leadership Program and give GVI team members the feedback they need to create a work and learning experience that Bridgeport youth value. Monthly meetings will give rise to creative solutions, resulting in the FLAG leading the improvement of the Youth Leadership Program.
3. The FLAG meetings are a space for youth to further develop skills or learn about topics that they were unable to incorporate into the summer youth program that they would like to deepen.
4. The FLAG meetings provide space for feedback for what they want from GVI during the summer youth crew and during the academic year.

Crew Leaders

Crew Leaders are those who apply for a second or third year to act as a liaison between the Farm staff, Youth Leadership Program staff, and other youth in the program. Crew Leaders are expected to perform and model GVI’s values of teamwork, antiracism, food justice, and compassion while exhibiting leadership through performing farm tasks, mentoring first year youth.



Youth Fellows

The youth fellowship is an academic two year internship designed in partnership to engage up to four youth to support young folks in creating a local community run food system in Bridgeport, CT. The Youth Fellowship is a two year commitment.

The fellows can expect to meet with their supervisor bi-weekly for 30 minutes to an hour. During the check-in the fellow will have a chance to report what is going on, ask any questions or discuss any concerns that might have arisen since the last time they met. Additionally, this will be the time to check in and explore projects or interest around food and to have an exploratory conversation around creating a local community run food system in Bridgeport.